The health and safety of Westmead’s patients, families, visitors, staff, students and researchers are the top priority for the Westmead Redevelopment team.

Westmead is one of Australia’s busiest health precincts and the important work across healthcare, research and education must be maintained during all construction works.

This fact sheet outlines how the Westmead Redevelopment project team is managing noise, vibration and dust, as well as how we remediate asbestos and prevent and control infection risks during the construction of the new central acute services building and the refurbishment program inside Westmead Hospital.

If you have concerns or questions
If you identify any hazards you should immediately contact the Westmead Redevelopment project office on 1800 990 296
You can also email with any questions at: WSLHD-WestmeadProject@health.nsw.gov.au

westmeadproject.health.nsw.gov.au
Dust Management

Reducing dust caused by construction is a key focus at Westmead. A broad range of dust mitigation measures are implemented on site, depending on the nature of the work that is being carried out.

These include:
- Changing the activities that take place during high winds and poor weather conditions
- The use of covers on material stockpiles
- Application of ‘dust block’ which seals dirt to ensure it doesn’t become airborne
- The use of road sweepers along surrounding roads to collect dust and dirt
- The use of hand-held water sprays and construction vehicle water carts
- Daily air monitoring and real time tracking during construction

Infection Control

Infection prevention is one of the key priorities in Australian hospitals. Construction has the potential to impact patient wellbeing.

An Infection Prevention Control Working Group is tasked with overseeing and co-ordinating the infection control strategy for all elements of the Westmead Redevelopment.

It is made up of infection control specialists from Western Sydney Local Health District, Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network, the contractors and other specialists, as required.

Importantly, each contractor working at Westmead is obligated to manage infection control risks as part of their contract deliverables and their processes are subject to ongoing checks and audits. This is outlined in an Infection Control Plan.

Noise and Vibration

The construction site for the new central acute services building is close to Westmead Hospital and The Children’s Hospital at Westmead, patients and staff, and alongside sensitive research and healthcare equipment. The refurbishment program inside Westmead Hospital will impact most floors and buildings within the hospital.

The Demolition/Excavation/Construction Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment sets out the management strategy for the Westmead Redevelopment project. This is guided by the Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW’s Interim Construction Noise Guideline.

Noise and vibration monitors are located in surrounding buildings and connected to a network which provides real-time alarms and monitoring. When set levels are exceeded, the construction management team and appropriate healthcare or research managers are notified and action is taken.

Overarching management and governance

All major construction projects, like the Westmead Redevelopment, need to comply with strict environmental and planning controls. Potential environmental impacts of construction at Westmead are governed by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). At Westmead, we’re taking additional measures to keep our patients, families, visitors, staff, students and researchers safe while we build our new central acute services building and undertake refurbishments inside Westmead Hospital.

The Westmead Redevelopment project team is working closely with the EPA.

The EPA has approved the strategy for environmental management, including for the remediation and management of asbestos at Westmead. Western Sydney Local Health District and the Westmead Redevelopment will continue to work closely with the EPA as all remediation works are completed.

In addition, Safework NSW has undertaken site inspections, in conjunction with the Westmead Redevelopment team and the independent hygienist. Safework NSW has been consulted and is satisfied with controls and practices in place for asbestos management at Westmead.
Asbestos are a group of natural occurring minerals. They were used as a reliable and durable construction material up until the 1980s. Asbestos material possesses strong fibres and is fire resistant, which is why they were used in building materials.

Where is asbestos used?
Asbestos is found in many houses and buildings built before the 1990s, including in roofing, guttering, vinyl flooring, wall sheeting and many other products.

When does asbestos pose a risk to health?
Asbestos fibres can pose a risk to health if they become airborne, as inhalation is the main way that asbestos enters the body. Small quantities of asbestos fibres are present in the air at all times. Most people are exposed to very small amounts of asbestos as they go about their daily lives and do not develop asbestos-related health problems.

Finding that your home or workplace has asbestos does not mean your health is at risk.

People who have suffered health effects from exposure to asbestos have generally worked in either the asbestos mining or milling industry, worked in industries involved in making or installing asbestos products, or are from the immediate families of these people. In all of these situations there was exposure to high levels of airborne dust, from either the processes involved or from the clothes of the workers. This was before disposable protective clothing requirements and other measures were introduced.

As part of a comprehensive management strategy of asbestos at Westmead, the Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD) and Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network (SCHN) have undertaken various Environmental Site Assessments and a site-wide Asbestos Quantification Assessment. There is an Asbestos Management Plan for all health facilities for WSLHD and SCHN.

The Asbestos Management Plan for the Westmead Redevelopment documents the procedures and controls required to be implemented during asbestos remediation works. WSLHD will control the Long Term Environmental Management Plan for the redeveloped areas once the Westmead Redevelopment project has been completed. The comprehensive management approach follows the Australian legislative and best practice model.

STEPS:
1. Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment
2. Detailed Environmental Site Assessment/Asbestos Quantification Assessment
3. Asbestos Management Plan
4. Remedial Action Plan(s)
5. Remediation and Validation
6. Site Validation Report
7. Assessment and remediation reporting
Am I safe to walk near asbestos works? Yes.

All works where asbestos may be present is carried out within exclusion zones. These exclusion zones will be back from the main construction site fence line that you will walk past or see.

The workers within these exclusion zones are qualified professionals, who are experts in asbestos management planning, identification, remediation and disposal. This is their job. They deal with asbestos remediation works over potentially an extended period of time.

They will be wearing protective clothing, such as respirators, fully disposable coveralls, gloves and footwear which are a regulatory requirement and keep them safe as they have direct contact with the soil.

People who have suffered health effects from exposure to asbestos have generally worked in either the asbestos mining or milling industry. The long term exposure is a risk for these workers so the clothing is an important additional protection for them.

Our approach to dust and asbestos management incorporates measures to protect people outside the exclusion zone. For example, extensive air quality monitoring, and the use of water and ‘dust block’ to seal dirt.

All works that are undertaken by these qualified professionals are overseen by the Contractor’s Hygienist, the Westmead Redevelopment’s Remediation Consultant and the independent NSW Environmental Protection Agency Accredited Site Auditor.